

104TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 686

To establish a commission to examine the costs and benefits, and the impact on voter turnout, of changing the deadline for filing Federal income tax returns to the date on which Federal elections are held.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 6 (legislative day, APRIL 5), 1995

Mr. KYL (for himself and Mr. MCCAIN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance

A BILL

To establish a commission to examine the costs and benefits, and the impact on voter turnout, of changing the deadline for filing Federal income tax returns to the date on which Federal elections are held.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Voter Turnout En-
5 hancement Study Commission Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds that—

1 (1) the right of citizens of the United States to
2 vote is a fundamental right;

3 (2) Federal, State, and local governments have
4 a duty to promote the exercise of the right to vote
5 to the greatest extent possible;

6 (3) the power to tax is only guardedly granted
7 to Federal, State, and local governments by the citi-
8 zens of the United States;

9 (4) the only regular contact that most Ameri-
10 cans have with their government consists of filing
11 personal income tax returns and voting in Federal,
12 State, and local elections;

13 (5) in 1992, almost 115,000,000 Federal in-
14 come tax returns were filed by individuals and cou-
15 ples, but only approximately 104,000,000 votes were
16 cast in the year's presidential election;

17 (6) an estimated 116 million Federal income
18 tax returns will be filed by individuals and couples
19 for 1994, but only about half that number of votes
20 were cast in that year's congressional elections; and

21 (7) more closely tying the rights of individuals
22 as voters to their obligations as taxpayers will pro-
23 vide additional incentives for individuals to both par-
24 ticipate in the electoral process and scrutinize the
25 costs and benefits of government policies.

1 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT.**

2 There is established a commission to be known as the
3 Voter Turnout Enhancement Study Commission (in this
4 Act referred to as the “Commission”).

5 **SEC. 4. MEMBERSHIP.**

6 (a) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Commission
7 shall be composed of 9 members appointed as follows:

8 (1) 3 members appointed by the President.

9 (2) 3 members appointed by the President pro
10 tempore of the Senate, upon the joint recommenda-
11 tion of the majority leader and the minority leader
12 of the Senate.

13 (3) 3 members appointed by the Speaker of the
14 House of Representatives, upon the joint rec-
15 ommendation of the Speaker and the minority leader
16 of the House of Representatives.

17 (b) POLITICAL AFFILIATION.—Not more than 2 of
18 the 3 members of the Commission appointed under any
19 1 paragraph of subsection (a) may be of the same political
20 party.

21 (c) TIME OF APPOINTMENT.—Members of the Com-
22 mission shall be appointed not later than 30 days after
23 the date of the enactment of this Act.

24 (d) TERMS.—Members of the Commission shall be
25 appointed to serve for the life of the Commission.

1 (e) VACANCIES.— Any vacancy in the Commission
2 shall be filled in the same manner as the original appoint-
3 ment.

4 (f) COMPENSATION.—

5 (1) RATE OF PAY.—Except as provided in para-
6 graph (2), members of the Commission shall serve
7 without pay.

8 (2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member of the
9 Commission shall be entitled to receive travel ex-
10 penses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as
11 authorized by section 5703 of title 5, United States
12 Code, for persons employed intermittently in the
13 Government service.

14 (g) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the
15 Commission shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser num-
16 ber of members may hold a hearing.

17 (h) CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON.—The
18 Commission shall select a Chairperson and Vice Chair-
19 person from among its members.

20 (i) MEETINGS.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall meet
22 at the call of the Chairperson or a majority of its
23 members.

24 (2) INITIAL MEETING.—The Commission shall
25 hold its initial meeting not later than 30 days after

1 the date on which all members of the Commission
2 have been appointed.

3 **SEC. 5. DUTIES.**

4 (a) STUDY.—The Commission shall conduct a com-
5 prehensive study of all matters relating to the possibility
6 of changing the filing date for Federal income tax returns
7 to the 1st Tuesday after the 1st Monday in November.
8 The study shall include an analysis of—

9 (1) the costs and benefits of the change in filing
10 date; and

11 (2) the likelihood that establishment of a single
12 date on which individuals can fulfill obligations of
13 citizenship as both electors and taxpayers will in-
14 crease participation in Federal, State, and local elec-
15 tions.

16 (b) CONSULTATION.—The Commission shall consult
17 with Governors, Federal and State election officials, the
18 Commissioner of Internal Revenue, and any other person,
19 agency, or entity that the Commission determines to be
20 appropriate.

21 **SEC. 6. POWERS.**

22 (a) HEARINGS.—The Commission may hold the hear-
23 ings, sit and act at the times and places, take the testi-
24 mony, and receive the information that the Commission
25 considers advisable to carry out the purposes of this Act.

1 (b) **MAILS.**—The Commission may use the United
2 States mails in the same manner and under the same con-
3 ditions as any other Federal department or agency.

4 (c) **POWERS OF MEMBERS AND AGENTS.**—Any mem-
5 ber or agent of the Commission may, if authorized by the
6 Commission, take any action that the Commission is au-
7 thorized to take under this section.

8 (d) **REQUESTS FOR OFFICIAL INFORMATION.**—The
9 Commission may request from a Federal department or
10 agency information necessary to enable the Commission
11 to carry out this Act. The head of the department or agen-
12 cy shall provide the information to the Commission unless
13 release of the information to the public by the agency is
14 prohibited by law.

15 **SEC. 7. STAFF ASSISTANCE FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.**

16 Upon the request of the Commission or the Chair-
17 person of the Commission, the head of any Federal depart-
18 ment or agency may detail any of the personnel of the
19 department or agency to the Commission to assist the
20 Commission to carry out this Act.

21 **SEC. 8. REPORT.**

22 Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment
23 of this Act, the Commission shall submit to the President
24 and the Congress a report that contains—

1 (1) a detailed statement of the findings and
2 conclusions of the study required by section 5; and

3 (2) recommendations of the Commission re-
4 garding any legislation or administrative action the
5 Commission considers appropriate.

6 **SEC. 9. TERMINATION.**

7 The Commission shall terminate upon the submission
8 of the report required by section 8.

9 **SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

10 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums
11 as may be necessary to carry out this Act.

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